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Insights into the Australian labour market

Key insights into Australian labour market over the past five years using Labour Account data

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Source:

[Labour Account Australia, March 2025 \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/mar-2025\)](#)

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Overview

With the March quarter 2025 release of the Labour Account, this article provides insights into the Australian labour market since the COVID-19 pandemic, analysing the changes in jobs, employed persons, hours worked and income between March quarter 2020 and March quarter 2025.

All data are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise noted.

About the Labour Account

The Labour Account provides an overall picture of the labour market by bringing together various sources into a single set of data to create a coherent and internally consistent set of high-quality labour market estimates. It is a rich source of data that can be used to better understand how the Australian labour market has evolved and changed over time. The Labour Account is our best source of quarterly industry and sector employment data; for more information please refer to [Spotlight on the Labour Account \(https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/spotlight-labour-account\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/spotlight-labour-account).

Key statistics

	Mar-20	Mar-25	5-year change	5-year change (%)
Filled jobs ('000)	14,006	15,931	1,925	13.7
Employed people ('000)	13,164	14,897	1,733	13.2
Hours worked ('000)	5,285,621	5,961,590	675,969	12.8
Labour income (\$m)	266,302	368,771	102,469	38.5

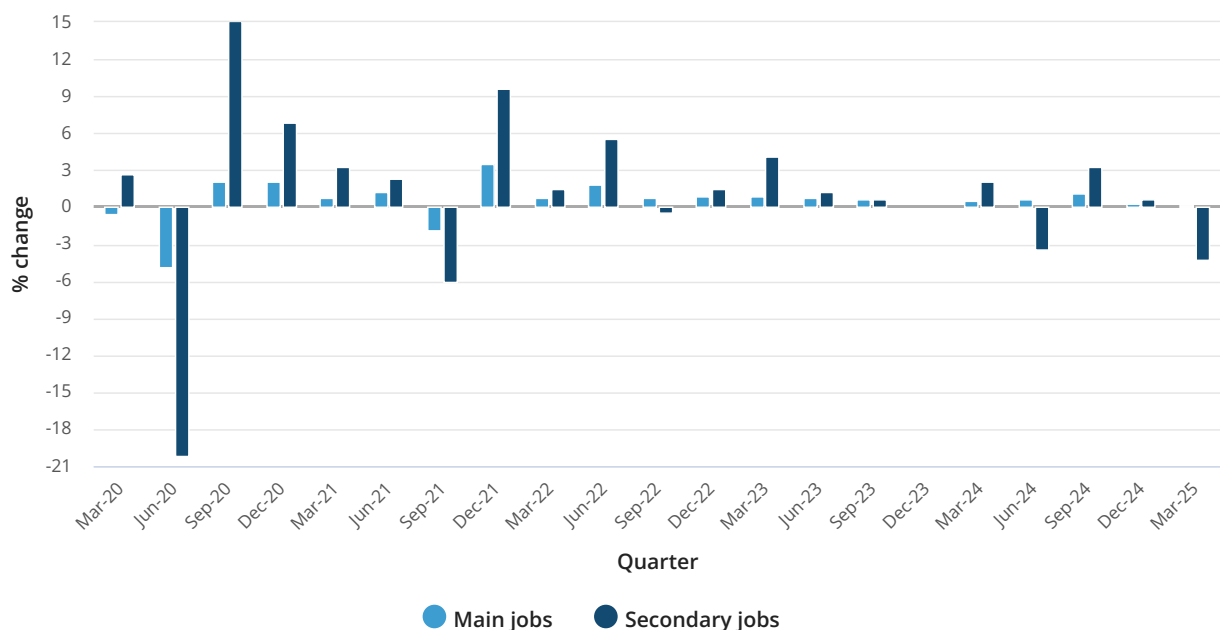
Labour market

The Australian labour market initially experienced disruptions from COVID with total jobs (filled jobs and vacant jobs) recording its largest fall of 6.4 per cent in June quarter 2020 in the Labour Account data that goes back to September quarter 1994. Since then, the labour market has grown strongly recording an average annual growth rate of 3.1 per cent in total jobs. This is 1.4 percentage points higher than the 10 years average annual growth rate prior to COVID, of 1.7 per cent. Over the past five years the labour market has been characterised by record low levels of unemployment and record highs in both the participation rate and job vacancies.

Filled jobs

Filled jobs (main jobs and secondary jobs) in Australia increased by 1.9 million jobs between Mar-20 and Mar-25. Main jobs accounted for 91 per cent of the growth in filled jobs, increasing by 1.7 million jobs (13.3 per cent), and secondary jobs increased by 182,000 jobs (20.7 per cent).

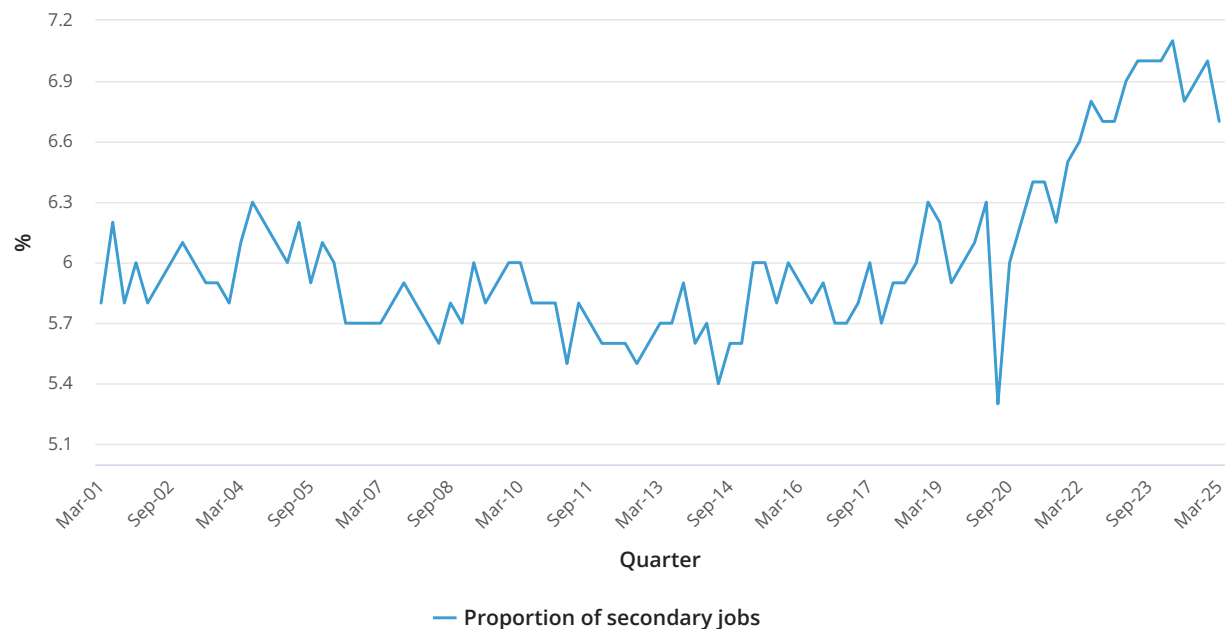
Filled jobs



Both main and secondary jobs recorded large falls in June quarter 2020 and September quarter 2021; both these periods were impacted by COVID related restrictions. Since then, the proportion of secondary jobs, measured as the number of secondary jobs as a proportion of filled jobs, have continued to trend higher than the pre-pandemic levels; with the series reaching its peak of 7.1 in March quarter 2024. This may be a reflection of prevailing economic conditions with workers choosing to take on additional jobs to attempt to work desired hours and earn extra money in a period characterised by [increased living costs \(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/selected-living-cost-indexes-australia/latest-release\).](#)

The growth in secondary jobs led to an increase in number of multiple job holders. In March 2025 around one in 15 employed persons had more than one job, compared to one in 17 employed persons in March 2020.

Proportion of secondary jobs



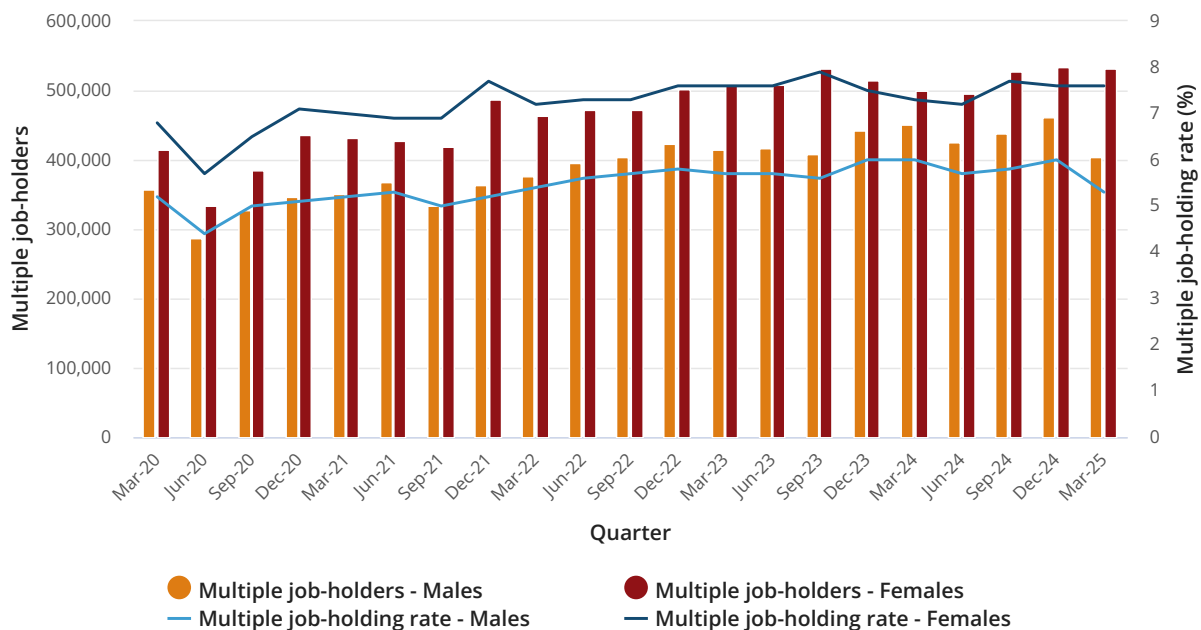
Multiple job-holding

The multiple job holding rate rose 0.5 percentage points from 6.0 per cent in March quarter 2020 to 6.5 per cent in March quarter 2025. The rate of multiple job-holding had usually been between 5.0 to 6.0 per cent before COVID.

Females continue to be more likely to be a multiple job holder recording an increase of 117,800 people, with the multiple job-holding rate increasing from 6.8 per cent to 7.6 per cent (in original terms) between March quarter 2020 and March quarter 2025.

Males also recorded a rise in the number of multiple job-holder, recording an increase of 48,600 people, with the multiple job-holding rate increasing from 5.2 per cent to 5.3 per cent (in original terms) over the last 5 years. This is explored further in [Multiple job-holders \(/statistics/labour/jobs/multiple-job-holders/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/jobs/multiple-job-holders/latest-release).

Multiple job-holding



Sector jobs

The non-market sector, which is comprised of Health care and social assistance, Education and training, and Public administration and safety industries, accounted for around 55 per cent of the growth in filled jobs over the last five years.

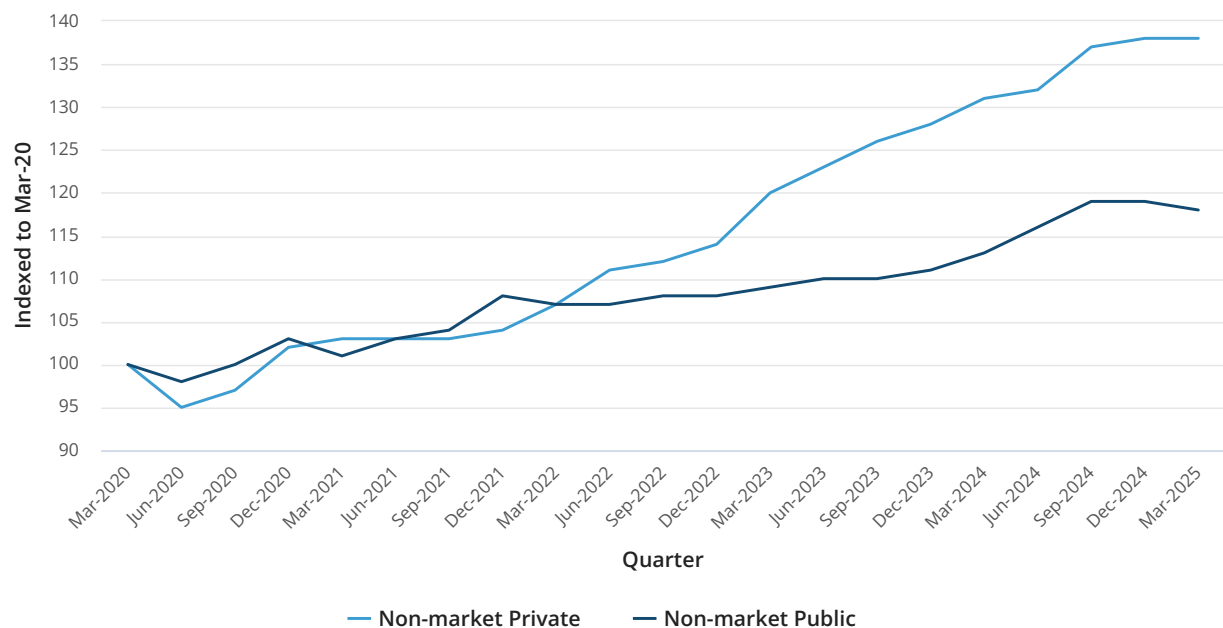
Of these industries, Health care and social assistance accounted for around 71% of the growth in non-market sector filled jobs during this period. Filled jobs in this industry rose 753,000 jobs. The industry was initially impacted by COVID related restrictions reducing face-to-face visits and elective surgery, however, delayed visits and surgeries supported the increases in this industry once the restrictions were lifted as extra capacity was required.

The ongoing ageing of the Australian population also contributed to an increased demand for both residential and home-based care services. In addition, record high labour force participation during the period contributed to an increased demand for childcare services. Overall, this resulted in an increase of 247 million hours worked (or 39.0 per cent), 735,000 additional employed persons (or 40.4 per cent), and a \$17.8 billion increase in labour income (or 51.5 per cent) over the past five years. Labour demand for health care services continues to be strong, despite the falls over the last two years, job vacancies are still 98.1 per cent higher than March quarter 2020.

While the Health care and social assistance industry, along with Education and training, and Public administration and safety, can be grouped together as the 'non-market sector', this sector does include a sizeable share of private sector jobs. In March quarter 2025, private sector has accounted for around 55 per cent of the jobs in the non-market sector compared to 52 per cent in March quarter 2020.

Private sector jobs within the non-market sector have increased by 726,000 jobs (38.0 per cent) and public sector jobs within the non-market sector have increased by 332,000 jobs (18.4 per cent) over the last five years.

Non-market filled jobs by sector



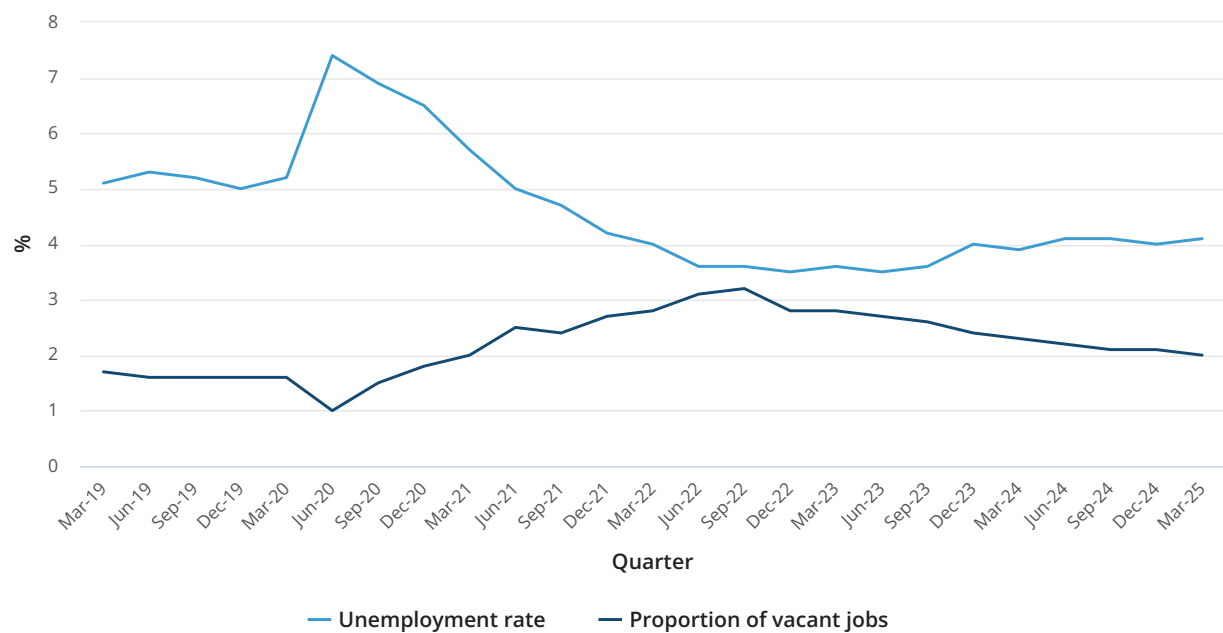
Proportion of vacant jobs

Proportion of vacant jobs (PVJ) provides insights into unmet labour demand, calculated as the number of vacant jobs as a proportion of total jobs.

PVJ initially fell in June quarter 2020 from 1.6 per cent to 1.0 per cent with a rise in unemployment rate. There is a converse relationship between PVJ and unemployment rate. From September quarter 2020, PVJ trended upwards as demand for labour increased when COVID related restrictions were lifted and reached its peak in September quarter 2022.

This period followed a decrease in the unemployment rate. Over the last two and half years, PVJ has eased, however, remains elevated compared to historical levels, while the unemployment rate has risen (remains low compared to historical levels).

Unemployment rate and the proportion of vacant jobs



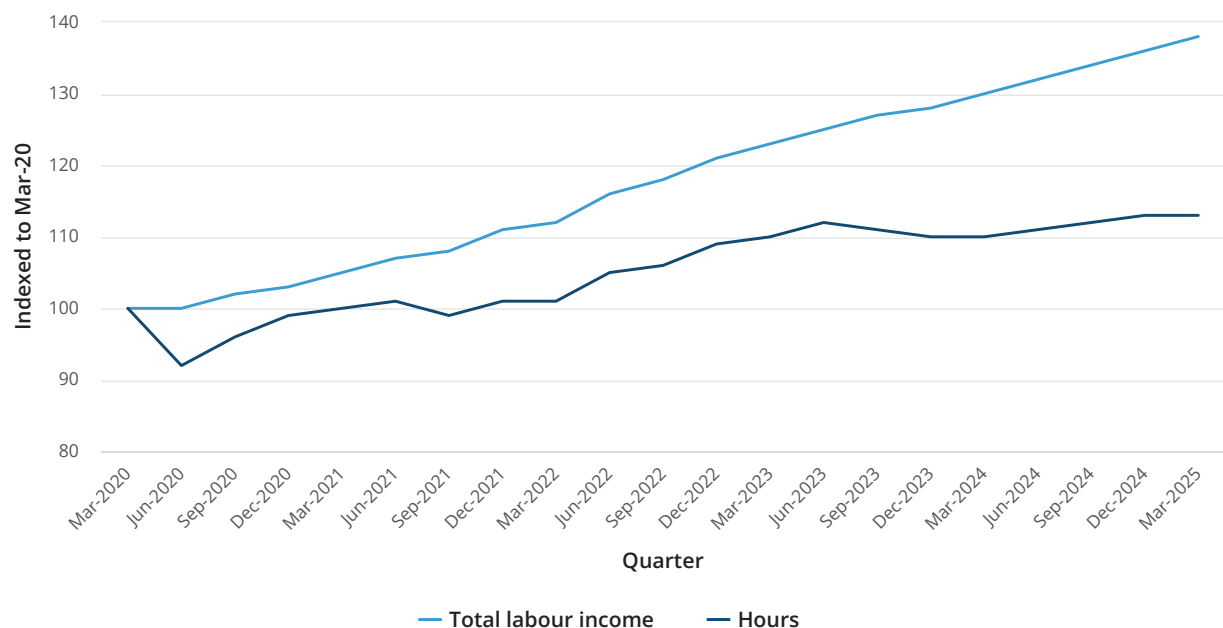
Hours worked and income

Hours worked have increased 12.8 per cent between March quarter 2020 and March quarter 2025, aligning with the increase in employed persons of 13.2 per cent over the same period.

Non-market sector accounted for 52.6 per cent increase in hours worked over the past five years. Health care and social services was the largest driver of the growth in non-market hours worked, accounting for 69.4% of the growth.

Total labour income increased 38.5 per cent (\$102.5 billion) during the same period, with Health care and social services accounting for 17.4 per cent of the rise. The stronger rise in labour income compared to hours worked is consistent with the 15.8 per cent increase seen in [wage price index \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/latest-release) over this period.

Hours worked and income



More information

For more information about the Labour Account and other labour statistics, please see:

- [Spotlight on the Labour Account \(/articles/spotlight-labour-account/\)](/articles/spotlight-labour-account/): Provides an overview of the Labour Account, its benefits and how it can be used to draw unique labour market insights.
- [Labour Account methodology \(/methodologies/labour-account-australia-methodology/mar-2025/\)](/methodologies/labour-account-australia-methodology/mar-2025/): Provides information on the conceptual framework, data sources, outputs and measurement error.
- [Guide to labour statistics \(/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/\)](/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/): Provides summary information on a range of labour market measures available from the ABS.
- [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release/\)](/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release/): Contains a comprehensive description of the concepts and definitions underpinning labour statistics and the data sources and methods used to compile them.
- [Labour statistics recent and upcoming developments \(/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/labour-statistics-recent-and-upcoming-developments/\)](/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/labour-statistics-recent-and-upcoming-developments/): Contains an overview of recent and upcoming developments in ABS labour statistics.